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SUBJECT: Ambassador Green's Farewell Remarks for Zanzibar

¶1. Ambassador Mark Green held a farewell gathering in Zanzibar on 8 January. He addressed an audience of 200 leaders drawn from Zanzibar's government, political, civil society, cultural, academic, business and media sectors. Resident American citizens attended as well. Muslim religious leaders who had attended previous similar events were noticeably absent on this occasion. The generally accepted explanation for their absence was protest against the conflict in Gaza. The speech was well received by senior leaders on both sides of Zanzibar's bitter political divide. It was covered in the print, online and broadcast media.

Zanzibar and the United States: Shared Experiences

¶2. Zanzibaris and Americans have been friends for many years. America's official presence on Zanzibar dates back to 1833 when a treaty between the United States and Oman provided for an American consular presence here. We have been your trade partners since the first American sailing ships blew in here from across the globe looking for whale oil to illuminate the streets of American cities. Later, they brought with them cotton cloth and guns, and traded for ivory and gum copal. Today we remain the largest buyers of your agriculture, especially seaweed. American visitors account for a significant share of your tourism industry. Trade and personal engagement always comes first. Government structures follow to secure these things. Before I arrived here and long after I am gone, the enduring relationship between our two peoples remains.

We respect Zanzibar's history, its cultural achievements and its unique union with mainland Tanzania. Zanzibaris contributed significantly toward the creation of a language and a culture that has spread throughout much of East Africa and beyond. Your music, your architecture, your literature, your handicrafts and the wisdom contained in your proverbs have added to the world's cultural heritage far out of proportion to the size of your population.

I ask you to keep in mind this long friendship and deep respect as I make some observations about our history. I make my remarks as the representative of a people who have had some similar experiences to your own. History is an awareness of what has happened to us in the past so that we can take control of what is happening to us now. Our views of what happened change from person to person and from moment to moment, but the act of self-examination is essential to improving our condition.

I've made about a dozen trips here in Zanzibar, including visits on my own time, with my friends and family, visiting Zanzibari friends and their families. I've been north and south of these islands, having discussions with Tanzanians from Pemba and Unguja. I ask my Zanzibar friends to remember that I speak as a friend and well wisher. Friends speak openly, honestly and frankly to one another. I wish to discuss with you some of my country's experiences struggling with political issues similar to those that confront Zanzibar's leadership today. I wish to share with you tonight a few aspects of American history and suggest points for Zanzibari leaders to think about as they consult together to determine solutions to today's pressing issues. In particular I wish to discuss our experiences with political tolerance, with power sharing and with the prosperity that flows from reconciliation. Maybe you can draw useful lessons from some of the poor choices we have made.

My country's history resembles that of Zanzibar in several ways. We too had a revolution against a monarchy. It is important to note that in the late 1700s not all Americans agreed with the struggle for independence from the British King. Our war for independence from Britain was, in part, a civil war amongst Americans. When revolutionary forces captured an area, it was common for the property of those who were loyal to the King to be confiscated by the revolutionary government. Known loyalists were arrested as potential spies. After the British defeat, many thousands of loyalists fled from the former colonies. Many took

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refuge in Canada, a Commonwealth country to this day.

In principle, we Americans believe that everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion. However, during a life and death struggle against what was then the mightiest empire on earth, our leaders did not extend that right to those who believed it was their duty to remain loyal to their King. Soon after we won independence, we were faced with another test of political tolerance when two fiercely-opposed factions arose within American society. Our second President, John Adams, feared that these factions would tear the country apart. He noted that each faction was supported by one of the two super-powers of the day, Britain and France, who were engaged in a world war. He wished to continue the non-aligned policy of the father of our nation, George Washington. He introduced laws, known as the Alien and Sedition Acts, which, among other things, severely limited the right of free speech. He defended these laws as necessary evils to prevent political passions from destroying the nation.

Historians judged his solution harshly, as did American voters. He lost his bid for re-election. The laws were repealed by his successor on the grounds that they were an affront to human rights. Restoration of the free expression of political opinion contributed to a return to social harmony. The dangers that Adams feared were real, but a better solution would have been for President Adams to use his influence to cool inflammatory rhetoric and to call publicly for all leaders to put the long-term best interests of the country ahead of short-term political interests.

Turning to today's Zanzibar, I note the heated rhetoric that some partisans from both sides of the political divide use about their rivals. Honest political disagreements can be ? and should be ? discussed respectfully between fellow citizens who share a common desire for the well-being of their shared community. The political climate of these isles would improve if the leaders of Zanzibar's major political parties publicly declared that they respect their rivals as patriotic

Zanzibaris and Tanzanians.

Demokrasia ni majadiliano. Democracy is dialog. Dialog requires mutual respect. By all means, argue about Zanzibar's policy options, but remember that political rivals are not enemies. Leaders have a duty to teach their supporters this truth and to correct those supporters who put party interests ahead of the interests of the community. Responsible leaders curb irresponsible supporters.

In the 1860's America fought a Civil War. We fought over how much freedom a region had within the national government. We fought over slavery. That conflict included violence against civilians and destruction of civilian property. After the slaughter stopped, it took us years to recover. Decades later, at the same moment in history when we emerged onto the world's stage as a great power, we also began to regenerate our society by making progress in reconciling Blacks and Whites in a way that had gone largely unaddressed 100 years after our Civil War. Regions of the country characterized by the greatest degree of racial intolerance were also the poorest, least educated and most ill-governed areas of the country. Once progress was made in reconciliation, these areas experienced rapid economic, social and political progress.

Zanzibar shares our sad history of political violence, slavery and the devastating consequences of extreme social and political divisions. We all know that the end of British colonial rule in Zanzibar was soon followed by a violent uprising against the first post-independence government. Sadly, that uprising included violence against civilians, as had also occurred during the American civil war. It takes a spirit of political tolerance and openness to public discussion of painful historical events to overcome such bitter history so that the community can move forward. My country knows this, as we had to do the same to overcome the bitterness left behind by certain episodes in our own past.

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Let me discuss the concept of power sharing. Our constitution, the supreme law of the United States, divides power between Federal and State governments. At both the Federal and State levels, power is further divided between the executive, legislative and judicial branches. It is common in the United States for one party to head the executive while another party heads the legislature. It is also common for the President to choose some ministers (we call them Secretaries) from the rival party. President Bush did this, as did his predecessor, President Clinton. President-elect Obama has indicated that he will do the same. Likewise, in the legislature, it is common for members of one party to join members of the rival party in support of a law opposed by their own party's leadership. No leader can ever have everything go entirely his way forever. No party ever wins 100% of power. No party is ever completely shut out of power. Today's opponent may be tomorrow's ally. No group should feel permanently alienated from government.

I am convinced that much of the bitterness in Zanzibari politics stems from traditions of political exclusivity. During the Omani, Portuguese, Sultanate and British periods, power was exclusively held in the hands of a few. There was little or no consultation or consideration of the interests of the majority of Zanzibaris. One side had all the power and the rest had none. To lose power was to lose everything. To a significant degree, this tradition survives today. Even though the form of government changed and the identity of the governing class changed, the zero-sum, all or

nothing, winner-takes-all political tradition did not change. I believe that for Zanzibar society and its economy to flourish, for Zanzibar to begin to tap its full potential, this tradition must be replaced by one of compromise, mutual respect and shared responsibility.

As many of you know, before my service as a diplomat, I was a politician. I've served in public office as a member of the Republican Party. Many Tanzanian observers are concerned about the continuity of America's major engagement here. President George W. Bush has led the largest commitment against a specific disease -- AIDS -- the world has ever seen. The President's Malaria Initiative has already produced a dramatic decline in deaths from that disease in these isles. The Millennium Challenge Account, which will fund a new and improved power cable connecting Unguja to the mainland and roads in Pemba, is another key pillar of our commitment here. I assure you that these people-to-people activities transcend American political rivalries. I was in Washington this August with President Kikwete. I personally followed-up on these programs with Congress's Democratic Party-controlled Congress under a Republican President. Leaders from both major parties worked together to allocate funds for our key programs in Tanzania because they saw the wisdom in strengthening our partnership with the Tanzanian people. This is the sort of attitude I am talking about. Political rivals? Sure! Enemies? Never! That which unites us is greater than that which divides us.

The first member of my party elected President of the United States was Abraham Lincoln. He once said, "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." I have had the honor of meeting Zanzibar's leaders. I believe they can pass such a test. At the same time, I want to make it clear to leaders from all sides that we prioritize our relations with the Zanzibari people over our relations with any one leader or party.

Once political competition in Zanzibar is channeled within a structure that reassures all citizens that their rights will be respected, even if their political rivals are in power, then governance will improve, severe resource disparities among the islands will equalize and the full economic potential of these islands will be realized. This is the moral thing to do. It is common sense. It is also good business sense. Everyone wins. Investors and tourists are attracted to well-governed, stable regions. They stay away from areas plagued by

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conflict and poor governance. Power sharing is not a matter of one side losing something and the other side gaining something. Power sharing is a way for all Zanzibaris and both major political parties to gain security and prosperity. That is what we most wish for all our Zanzibari friends. That is what we ourselves witnessed when regions of my country that most suffered from severe social divisions began to reconcile. The result was social renewal, improved governance and greater prosperity.

Leaders must help their supporters see that Zanzibaris are best served by politics in which no one completely wins and no one completely loses. In such politics, those in the majority realize that unless they produce results for the voters, they will soon find themselves in the minority. Voters learn to judge political parties and politicians by the results they produce, not by their ethnic or regional identities or by their historical loyalties.

When President Kikwete took office, he declared that reconciliation on Zanzibar was his highest domestic

priority. He said, "I know that the final decision concerning the political and future leadership of Zanzibar depends on Zanzibaris themselves. But we have one republic, one country. What happens in Zanzibar affects us all." We all support the President's desire to work with Zanzibar's leaders to bring reconciliation to these isles.

American President John F. Kennedy, a friend to Africa, once said, "Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate." As friends of Tanzania, and friends of Zanzibar for many years, let me suggest that the two parties must not be afraid to negotiate. A negotiation in which each side gives . . . and both sides gain.

I am confident that Zanzibar's current set of political leaders are capable of reaching a power sharing agreement and implementing it in a sincere fashion that serves the best interests of all Zanzibaris. I believe these leaders will agree on an arrangement that gives confidence to all political players so that the 2010 elections in Zanzibar will be free, fair and peaceful. This is crucial, because Zanzibar cannot afford another controversial and disputed election. The make up of the post-2010 election power sharing government should be based on the will of the Zanzibari people as expressed through peaceful, free and fair elections. My confidence is based on the conviction that the leaders of the rival parties have Zanzibar's best interests at heart and on my knowledge that Zanzibar's leaders can count on the goodwill and assistance of their fellow Tanzanians in the Union government and of the American people.

Thank you for honoring me with your presence this evening. I am grateful for having had the opportunity to serve here, and I wish you a fond farewell.

GREEN